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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2009

In Today's Papers

Armenia- Azerbaijan: "The Ice is Melting"  
Taha Akyol writes in mainstream Milliyet: "President Gul and FM Davutoglu met with Azeri leader Aliyev and FM Mehmetyarov for one and half hour in Nahcivan the other day. Both, Gul and Davutoglu came out of the meeting looking very pleased. We asked President Gul whether Azerbaijan was convinced and whether the protocol with Armenia would progress? Here is President Gul's answer "Azerbaijan trusts Turkey and Turkey's efforts. In Kishnev Aliyev and Sargsian will meet as well. We advanced so much in resolving this issue in the Caucasus. We are advancing in our meetings and in the Upper Karabakh issue gradually, by deleting the problems one by one. We are melting an iceberg with our warm breath. We believe that the water should start running soon." At the end of his remarks, President Gul highlighted the fact that, in order to resolve issues, the public should not be provoked during the process."

Turning Point Over Iran. Media continue to digest the outcome of the talks between P5+1 officials and Iran on its nuclear program. In "Cooperation and Transparency Period with Iran," liberal Radikal says, "After talks in Tehran, UN nuclear agency head Mohamed El Baradei announced that IAEA will inspect Iran's new uranium enrichment plant on October 25." The paper quotes Baradei as saying "there is a 'shifting of gears' in Iran's confrontation with the West to more cooperation and transparency." Islamist oriented Yeni Safak writes, "Baradei said there is no concrete proof of an ongoing weapons program in Iran." Meanwhile, mainstream Sabah pays attention to New York Times report indicating IAEA's report that says Iran "has sufficient information to be able to design and produce an atom bomb." Ali Aslan in Islamist-oriented Zaman, says America is crafting a containment policy for Iran as a back-up plan and that Turkey's role in it - as well as the development of Turkey's nuclear program, will zoom. Aslan predicts that PM Erdogan will go to Washington during the upcoming months to meet President Obama and that the main agenda will be the Iran issue. In fact, because of regional developments, the development of Turkey's own nuclear program is more often on the agenda. It is to Turkey's advantage, Aslan notes, that the new administration in the US doesn't carry out the previous administration's "you are either with us or against us" policies and that "Turkey should be able to

explain to Washington and to Western capitals that some of our policies, including the Iran issue, don't form up due to strategic reasons but for tactical reasons. This is a must, because, when the issue is Turkey, even the most informed Americans still need further education."

Iraq-PKK: "Critical Summit in Erbil"

Fatih Cekirge predicts an acceleration in the PKK arms issue following next week's "critical" three country summit meeting in Erbil and that four countries will benefit when the PKK lays down its arms. Writing in mainstream Hurriyet: "Turkey, the US and Iraq will hold a three-party security summit. Turkey, the US, Iraq and Syria attach importance to the summit. The US wants to leave a peaceful oil region after its withdrawal from Iraq. The US doesn't want Turkish interventions in Northern Iraq any longer because it might interrupt the petroleum production. That is why, the US wants to disarm the PKK. Iraq doesn't want Turkish military presence in Northern Iraq any longer and therefore, Iraq also wants to disarm the PKK. Following improved relations between Turkey and Syria, Syrian leader Assad recently announced that Syria is ready to accept PKK militants of Syrian origin, if they lay their arms. On this issue, Turkish interests are parallel to the US interests. The US supports Turkey's democratic opening in order to boost democratization. The aim here is to prevent PKK efforts to recruit new militants. Turkey pursues the same goal. This is why Ambassador Jeffrey visited the main opposition party CHP leader Baykal and indirectly mentioned the US support for the government's democratic opening. A new process might start after the security summit in Erbil which will be a process for the PKK to lay down its arms."

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DOMESTIC NEWS: AKP and DTP Hold Annual Congresses

Erdogan: "We will not sacrifice democracy, secularism and the rule of law"

Media outlets report that at the ruling AK Party's congress held Saturday, Prime Minister Erdogan said the government intended to serve the country without sacrificing democracy, secularism and the rule of law. In his speech to the congress, Erdogan said the opposition MHP had already rejected the Kurdish initiative, and that there was no need to talk to the party. Erdogan said the main opposition CHP had yet to officially make its stance clear. "I will send to Deniz Baykal a written request for a meeting," said Erdogan.

A statement released during the convention said, "Our main aim is for all citizens, no matter where they live or to which ethnicity they belong, to feel free and equal members of this country." Erdogan said the government would continue to work to guarantee that Turkey becomes a member of the EU. He complained the EU was trying to change the rules of the game despite the fact that the game had already been started. Mainstream Milliyet says that after the AK Party congress, Erdogan is expected to give top posts to Kurds in line with his government's democratic initiative. There are speculations that following the general elections in 2011, Erdogan will run for presidency in 2012, says Milliyet.

Kurdish DTP Holds Party Congress

Papers report Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP has held on Sunday its third extraordinary congress with the participation of foreign observers and thousands of members. Tensions rose when a group holding posters of the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan and the PKK flags stormed into the hall. "The state has finally seen that pressure policies cannot solve the Kurdish problem," said chairman Ahmet Turk, claiming "20 million of the Kurdish population is deprived of equal rights and freedoms." "In order to cease armed conflicts, the PKK should not be excluded from the solution process." Turk said the government's Kurdish move would not be successful unless the Constitution was amended. "We expect Mr. Prime Minister to be bold and decisive; this process should not turn into a process of delay. The PKK should not be excluded from the solution process," said Turk. Turk said the ongoing military operations should be ceased, and criticized a possible extension of the parliamentary permit for cross-border military operations into northern Iraq. Turk referred to the examples of Ireland, Spain, Belgium and South Africa: "They succeeded in getting rid of their

authoritarian past and raised their welfare remarkably. None of them were divided."

Liberal Radikal says some PKK supporters were blocked from taking the podium during the gathering. Mainstream Vatan highlights Turk's speech, the part where he said, "No one has a magic wand to solve the problem, but the key to open the lock is in the hands of Ocalan." In "We won't be the side which blocks a solution," Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says some party supporters in the congress hall protested some masked pro-PKK members who tried to take the podium. Mainstream Hurriyet says the DTP congress called on Erdogan to be "courageous" regarding the Kurdish initiative. Nationalistic-conservative Tercuman comments that at the convention while Turk was talking about living together like brothers, the separatist showed their real intentions of dividing Turkey.

Celik: Halki Seminary can be reopened

The ruling AK Party's newly elected board member, former education minister Huseyin Celik told mainstream Aksam the Halki Seminary could be "easily reopened" without making legal changes. "The Seminary can be affiliated to the Education Ministry, or it can be tied to a foundation as a two-year college," said Celik.

Towards A New EU. (Milliyet) Media note the importance of Ireland's approval for the EU's Lisbon Treaty with 67.1 percent 'Yes.' Mainstream Milliyet notes, "The Irish were the only member subjecting the EU plans for reshaping its institutions and

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decision-making to a nationwide referendum." Mainstream Vatan writes in, "EU Reaches its Desired Constitution," that, "the approved Lisbon Treaty foresees a presidency representing the EU and UK's former Prime Minister Tony Blair is the strongest candidate." In "The EU will Awaken," Cengiz Aktar of mainstream Vatan is optimistic that because the need for consensus is over -- the votes of 15 of 27 EU states will be enough."

Attack in Afghan Village Kills 8 US Troops. Media outlets carry straightforward coverage on the attack on remote Afghan outposts killing eight US soldiers. Mainstream Milliyet says, "the deadliest attack for coalition forces since a similar raid in July 2008 which killed nine American soldiers in the same mountainous region." In "Shock to the US Forces in Afghanistan," Islamist oriented Yeni Safak writes, "Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in Nuristan province which is known as an al-Qaeda base."

#### Upcoming Events:

Q On Tuesday, the Turkish Parliament will discuss a motion authorizing cross-border military operations into northern Iraq.

Q On October 13, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and his Syrian counterpart Walid al-Mouallem will sign an agreement on visa exemption.

Q On Monday, Turkey-Iran joint business council will hold a meeting in Istanbul.

Q On October 10, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Armenia will sign in Zurich a protocol for the normalization of bilateral ties.

JEFFREY